

Psych teacher soothes Kinlaw

By Mark Viera

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Sometimes, before games, Rodney Kinlaw will receive a text message: "Are you relaxed?"

"I'm relaxing right now," he'll respond.

He's calm, visualizing himself as a jet on a runway. The brake is applied but the engines are on turbo, building pressure as they rev up.

"Be relaxed," Dr. Earnest Blackshear will respond. "Be that jet on the runway."

Blackshear, 45, is a clinical psychologist and former adjunct Penn State psychology professor who worked this summer on cognitive exercises to help Penn State running back Kinlaw and wide receiver Terrell Golden. The goal, Blackshear says, is to help condition their minds for competition.

You can see hints of Blackshear's work in Kinlaw's career performance against Buffalo. He had 129 yards and a touchdown on 23 carries. Kinlaw hit holes affirmatively and was quick to burst once he reached the line of scrimmage. And now, it's unclear who is the No. 10 Nittany Lions' featured back. So far, coaches and players said, using an equitable two-back system suits them just fine.



Nathan A. Smith/Collegian

Rodney Kinlaw (20) worked with Dr. Earnest Blackshear, a clinical psychologist, this summer to help him become more relaxed and patient while on the field.

That's also where Blackshear — someone whom Kinlaw considers a mentor — might help.

Blackshear, who has worked at Ground Zero with victims of post-traumatic stress disorder associated with 9/11, teaches relaxation. He wants to slow down performance anxiety to a point where Kinlaw is

patient. He wants to help him remain ready for his chance to enter the game. And once he gets in the game, he wants to help teach Kinlaw to wait for holes to develop.

Blackshear wants Kinlaw to become that jet on the runway.

"He's helped a lot, especially with Rodney," Golden says. "He's helped

[Kinlaw] relax a lot and you can see it in the way he runs. ... He's almost a completely different player from a poise standpoint."

Blackshear met Kinlaw, Golden and a few other Penn State players two years ago at a campus outreach and education program for his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi. The goal of the

African American fraternity's program was to "illuminate black males," Blackshear says, by making sure they were "aspiring as high as they can academically."

Blackshear has been in contact with Kinlaw ever since.

In fact, Kinlaw and Golden and a

See KINLAW, Page 16.

Connor accepts leading position

By Corey McLaughlin

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Dan Connor already appreciated how well Paul Posluszny played middle linebacker. Now, Connor fully understands the responsibility he had.

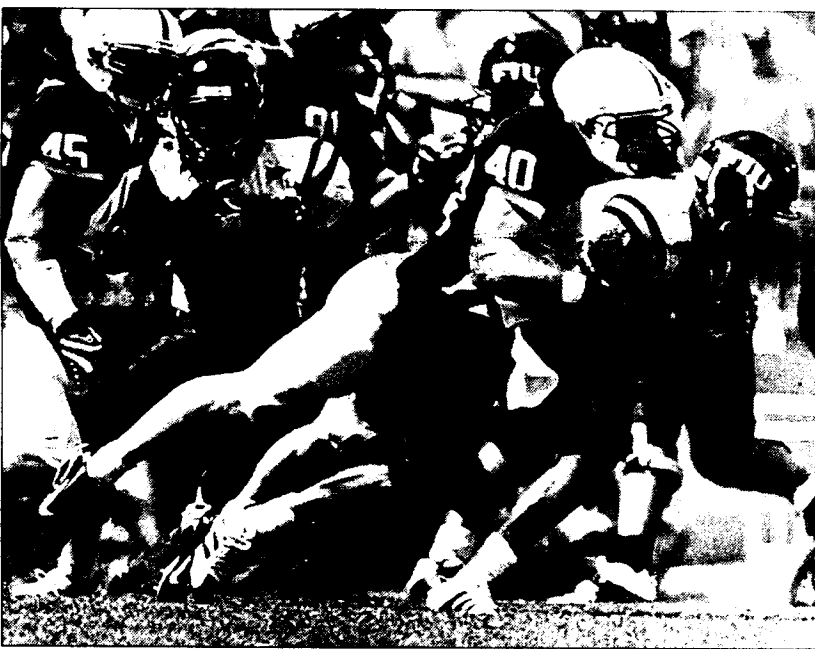
After playing outside linebacker for two seasons, Connor moved to the middle this spring, traveling the same path Posluszny followed before his senior year.

And like Posluszny, Connor's responsibilities multiplied with the move.

It's not just running around and tackling. Those are the easy tasks, Connor said, compared to his annual duties before the snap.

Prior to each play, Connor announces the defense in the huddle. After the players' break, he glances at the opposing offense and screams out alignments for the defensive linemen in front of him. If they're not where they are supposed to be, he has to yell again.

Then, if need be, he helps the defensive backs behind him with their coverage call. By the time a running back lowers a shoulder into



Tom Varratta/Collegian

Dan Connor (40) changed positions this season and has gained a larger role.

him, Connor's job is halfway over, but the work goes relatively unnoticed and doesn't appear in a statistical category.

"Dan is the captain of the defense. He calls everything and gets everybody in the right positions," cornerback Lydell Sargeant said. "He has an unlimited amount of responsibilities. Without having Dan on the field, I don't know what we could do."

Connor took over those jobs in the spring after deciding to return for his senior season.

Instead of entering April's NFL draft, where he likely would have been picked with Posluszny and the Nittany Lions' four other selections, Connor shifted inside to middle linebacker for his final collegiate year.

The transition "hasn't been too bad," Connor said.

Through three games, he leads the

team in total tackles (29), solo tackles (20), tackles for loss (4.5) and is tied for the sack lead (3).

He's also approaching Posluszny's school career record of 372 tackles. Connor currently has 303 and, on his current pace, would break Posluszny's record when the Lions play Temple in the second-to-last game of the regular season.

"He's the leader," said outside linebacker Sean Lee, who ranks second in tackles with 23. "What Puz was for us last year, Dan is this year. ... The way he approaches the game, he's a lot more relaxed and methodical, but he's still focused. He's got great instincts. I just watch him and almost how he dissects plays."

That part, when you're "reading and reacting," Connor said, hasn't been a challenge.

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Struggles vs. UM a persistent trend

By Kevin Horan, Corey McLaughlin and Mark Viera

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Joe Paterno was a spry 69-year-old and Anthony Morelli was only 11 in 1996, the last time Penn State defeated Michigan in a football game.

The Nittany Lions and Wolverines have played eight times since then, four times at Beaver Stadium, four times in Ann Arbor, and the results have been the same.

Penn State lost every contest.

Early in the string of defeats, Michigan's defense dominated two talented Penn State teams. Toward the middle, the Wolverines took advantage of the Lions during a few down seasons, before they most recently handed Penn State its only loss in 2005 and rolled over the Lions last year on their way to the BCS.

Current Penn State players are aware of the circumstances surrounding the last two defeats, but here's a look at them all:

Nov. 8, 1997

Beaver Stadium
 UM 34, PSU 8

The Wolverines' national championship train stopped in State College. Both teams entered the game undefeated (No. 2 Penn State at 7-0, No. 4 Michigan at 8-0) with high hopes for the postseason. But this game was all Michigan's.

The Wolverines, who led the Big Ten in all defensive categories, limited quarterback Mike McQueary to 68 passing yards and the Lions to 169 yards of total offense, their lowest total since 1988.

At the season's end, Brian Griese led Michigan to a Rose Bowl win, and Wolverines cornerback Charles Woodson won the Heisman. The loss was Penn State's only home defeat as it finished 9-3, losing to Florida in the Citrus Bowl.

Nov. 7, 1998

Michigan Stadium
 UM 27, PSU 0

"Annihilation" was the Collegian's
 See STRUGGLES, Page 16.

Women's soccer nets five late goals in win

By Steve Maslowsky

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Sandwiched between games with top-25 teams, it would have been easy for the No. 17 Penn State women's soccer team to overlook its midweek showdown with intrastate rival Bucknell.

And for 45 minutes of soccer last night at Varsity Soccer Field in Lewisburg, it looked like that would be exactly what would happen.

However, the Nittany Lions scored five goals in the second half last night to secure a 5-1 win that didn't come as easily as the final score indicates.

Penn State (4-2-1) went into the locker room at the end of the first half locked in a scoreless tie with underdog Bucknell (3-4).

"It was a tale of two halves," Penn State head coach Erica Walsh said. "Bucknell was probably the better of the two teams in the first half."

The Lions recorded only five shots in the first half, compared to 15 in the second. Penn State outshot Bucknell by a margin of 20-7 overall.

The team leaned on its leaders in the second half, with captain Aubrey Aden-Buie scoring twice, and Katie

Schoepfer, captain Jessie Davis, and Ashley Myers accounting for the rest of the goals. Melissa Hayes contributed three assists.

The offense has leaned on Aden-Buie and Schoepfer all season long, as they are first and second on the team with four and three goals tallied, respectively.

The inconsistent performance is nothing new for the Lions this season, as they have dropped contests to No. 13 Tennessee and No. 18 West Virginia but had an impressive road win over No. 23 Connecticut and played to a tie with No. 6 Texas A & M.

The season so far has Walsh, in her first year at Penn State, still looking to find her team's identity. "The character [of the team] is still being tested," Walsh said. "We just need a little bit of a fire lit under us."

Walsh plans to provide some of that fire herself, as she indicated after the game that she will hold all of the players accountable for their performance.

"Those players that perform well will get the opportunity," she said. "And those that don't will have to do some soul-searching."

The Lions will return to action this Sunday against No. 21 Notre Dame, the team that eliminated them from the NCAA tournament last year.

Lions looking for luck to open Big Ten play

By Tom Brolley

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The last time the Penn State women's volleyball started its season with two losses in its non-conference schedule was in 2005. That year, the Nittany Lions lost to Nebraska and Stanford, but finished undefeated in Big Ten play.

This year's No. 3 Lions are hoping for a similar fortune in conference play after suffering non-conference losses to No. 1 Nebraska and No. 2 Stanford.

But getting through the Big Ten without a loss will be a challenge. Through the non-conference schedule, the 11 conference schools amassed a 91-26 (.778 winning percentage). Every team comes into Big Ten play with a winning record and no more than four losses.

However, Penn State coach Russ Rose believes it is sometimes hard

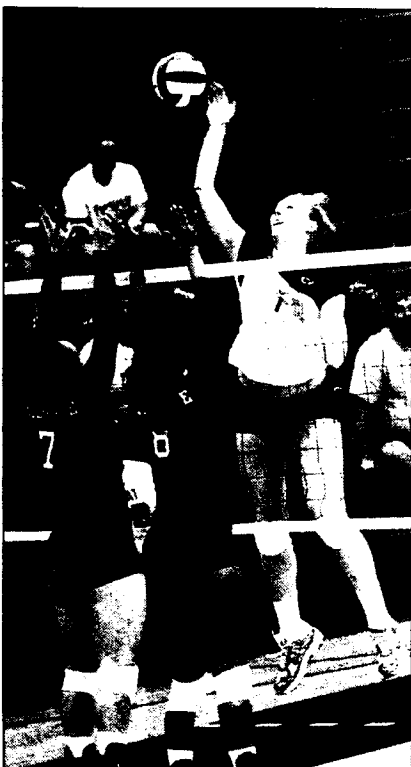
to compare teams based on pre-season results because teams play much different non-conference schedules.

Volleyball is the only Big Ten sport that plays a double round-robin schedule, during which every team plays each other at home and on the road. Even with a few upsets mixed in during the season, Rose believes the double round-robin usually ends up with the best teams in the conference near the top.

"It gives you the best indicator of who the best team was through the course of the season," he said. "It doesn't mean that's the team that's going to get hot in NCAA playoffs and compete for the national championship, but it does give you an indication that, over a 10-week period, this team [the Big Ten champion] had the best product."

During the last four years, there

See W. VOLLEYBALL, Page 16.



Kyle Lewis/Collegian

Nicole Fawcett spikes the ball over two Colgate defenders earlier this season.